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ABSTRACT

These workshop materials describe an approach to teaching children about dinosaurs. The lesson centers on a story written by Dr. Edith Bondi and illustrated by Shawn Turung, entitled "Just Like People." The story, appended, consists of 36 ways dinosaurs are similar to and, occasionally, different from human beings. Illustrations, too, are appended. (RH)

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CHILDREN APPRECIATE RHYTHM
AS THE REPETITION OF A PATTERN IN TIME

A Practical Language Development Workshop
for Application by Parents and Teachers
at Home and at School

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CHILDREN APPRECIATE RHYTHM
AS THE REPETITION OF A PATTERN IN TIME

by Edith F. Bondi, Ph.D.

My thoughts are usually spurred by happenings with children who surround me, in my classroom, at the market, in the elevator, and at play, in the park. I wonder what prompts children to respond to events, and what encourages them to express these responses to each other, and to me. I have examined my ways of communication with youngsters. Upon evaluation of the feedback that comes to me, under various circumstances I find that one common feature is rhythm. We talk in rhythm, taking turns in conversation, appreciating other people's rhythm with speaking and listening, questioning and answering. We sing, and speak music, prose, and poetry, in rhythm. We experience biological rhythm when hunger demands replenishment of energy, we know of night or day, and of jet lag. We feel tired, when we need sleep. Rhythm is our essential time piece, throughout the year, with the seasons, the climate, and our personal activities.

Rhythm may be interpreted as the repetition of a pattern, in time. Our lives adjust to an individual pattern that is in harmony with daily activities. As a teacher, I can help to establish personal discipline in children that will allow them to assert themselves, and to communicate their ideas responsibly, in acceptable language. Repetition is joyful reinforcement, especially for young children, because each known factor is an achievement that may be recognized, and a bridge to further knowledge.

My intention, as an educator is to enhance natural curiosity by providing my young students with an inner framework upon which they can build language, for daily pursuits. I have discovered that rhythm is one of the most important tools for systematic thinking, because it is the repetition of a pattern. Especially, young children enjoy repetition, because every time that a familiar event recurs, it becomes the stepping stone for additional knowledge. The element of satisfaction in gaining a foothold is the encouragement for applying knowledge toward future endeavours, and challenges. As a teacher, I must recognize, and channel in a certain direction the skills that a student has mastered. A pupil must be helped to build self-discipline upon personal strengths, by employing all of the senses, to full capcity. The foundation for my education research is to furnish a structure that consists of observation, description, and communication. Rhythm is harmony. The purpose of my teachings is to provide students with a framework upon which they can build practical ways of language application, during daily pursuits. In working with the young, my goal is to find a constructive approach toward a strategy for the best way of applying our voices. Language is one efficient, effective communication tool for transmitting ideas, in exchange for thoughts by others. I also lend direction, during discussions for the expansion of thinking horizons.

When I came to the Museum of Natural Science, I was invited to teach groups of young children about dinosaurs. Little did I know of dinosaurs, and they were as far away from me as the moon! I was given printed matter that had been assembled for dinosaur discussions, and for coloring of dinosaur pictures. Since it left me with no interest in dinosaurs, other than the fact that people of all ages seemed to be fascinated by these critters, I set out to question what they meant, to various kids. The element of mystique prevailed in their minds. It turned out to be an escape into fairyland. The answer that has emerged as my instructional guideline, for the interpretation of the imaginary days of yore is a plan to bring dinosaurs to the rhythm of personal needs:

"Are dinosaurs like people?" "No", say my students, every time. "Do they have eyes, ears, a nose, a mouth, and feet?" "Yes, just like people!" There is no limit to the information that a teacher can present, in ecological, and economic terms, to any age group, for identification of personal requirements, for comfort, and growth. At first, the study focus is on size, color, texture, and shape of dinosaur models', and people's features. We can see and feel, those. We conclude that, even in olden days, there was a need to cope with climate, and that dinosaurs were bound to hear the wind, in the woods, the weather, rushing waters, and other sounds of the wild. We continue by discussing food, shelter, and water, and compare these needs, for ourselves, and for dinosaurs, respectively.

We observe routine with our imagination: How can we bring something into our home that we can't see, hear, smell, or touch? We explore the feeling of improvisation. We describe facts, and we come to think that dinosaurs probably had the same needs as people. Each classroom participant contributes unique factors to our particular group of people, to our performance. I assist in bringing to the attention of each student the best way of making a personal contribution to harmonious group activities.

Delving into language development, we learn to say the names of the various pre-historic creatures. We find that they have been given according to people's judgement of biological, or ecological, and economic, or health, and social needs, and that they can be compared to people's pulse beats, in their lives' rhythm. By isolating, and identifying the use of the senses, I am able to observe the strengths of my students. The way in which a child walks into the classroom, allows me to catch the mood that this person brings to the group. Is it a reticent, boisterous, or scanning attitude? Is it for a place among people, or for one away from them, for a clear perspective, for sizing up the entire group, or to isolate certain classmates, or, perhaps to view the teacher? I must size up the children to plan the routine for this particular group of students.

My next task is to prepare my pupils, for a presentation of the reading, or picture assignment, at hand. We are about to study the world of dinosaurs. My classroom equipment is placed in readily accessible position, and with proper illumination, for seeing, and reading the images. Seating children in the classroom, and presenting them with the topic- pictures, dinosaurs-, body posture, for conveniently viewing the text, for proper illumination, and access, are the fundamental tools for success with tasks! While we study, I monitor each student, for the most convenient body position in a chair, both feet on the ground, knees together, back upright, elbows against the ribs, hair out of face, hands, and eye-focus on the text, to keep it straight, under easy control. We become aware of our requisitions, for comfort. I present the youngsters with the facts, description of dinosaurs, and the story outline. With verbal communication, we compare the actions of our ways with dinosaurs' ways. Almost inadvertently, I help the children to observe themselves and each other.

Now, we are ready to view the pictures of dinosaurs. We see that they have features similar to those of people. We find that, in order to subsist, they conduct themselves much, "like people". We follow the story, JUST LIKE PEOPLE, conceived, and written by Dr. Edith F. Bondi, and illustrated by Shawn Turung. It is in the APPENDIX.

By verbal communication, we compare the dinosaurs' days' activities with our own, considering food, clothing, shelter, and water needs. In the process of our discussions, we come to the conclusion that dinosaurs must have had similar requirements, for subsistence, as people. They may have lived "just like people". We explore what kind of food we and the dinosaurs may desire, why, when, and how we like to prepare, or consume it, what types of water bodies we, and dinosaurs would find, and how we, and they would gain access to water, or use it, in our homes. By way of comparison, we go through the day, by discussing the activities pursued by us, and, possibly by dinosaurs. Young children enjoy the rhythm of repetition, concerning thoughts of food, clothing, shelter, and water. Why would dinosaurs want to be in, or near water? Did they brush their teeth? How were their teeth kept clean? We go down the JUST LIKE PEOPLE list, and compare people's, and dinosaurs' reasons for doing things, and how nature affects all of us.

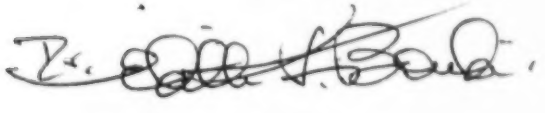
Finally,we question the author's intentions of observing, describing, and communicating the contents of the book. We note that we are able to look into a mirror, to see ourselves, that we try to copy what other people do, and we begin to realize that we have reasons for doing things, to sustain ourselves, to assist someone, and for play.

Dinosaurs were not necessarily thinking, they only followed up on nature's gifts, for their resources of nourishment, and physical welfare, as well as for the care of their families. The book conveys activities of dinosaurs, and we become awareof our own, and other people's needs, for pursuing the activities, and for appreciating our own, and their accomplishments. I fashion my publication by developing it from observation of individuals, plants, and objects that appear in the story. I carry out my publication by the description of events. I dispense my publication by communication, including language development, symbols, various print-types, and illustrations.

In our classroom, I gather, and prepare sentences, songs, and poems of youngsters' responses to the JUST LIKE PEOPLE book, on a tape recorder. I copy the recording on the chalkboard, or on a large chart. Together, we read them, aloud, and act them out. We draw our own pictures about them, mold clay sculptures, to represent dinosaurs and people, and we place them on aluminum foil, to serve as a mirror. We cut out pictures of tools that man has made, and that we can use to do some of the things that dinosaurs did, without man, and man's equipment. We share our activities, with family, friends, neighbors, Senior Citizens,the infirm, and with other classes.

During the study of JUST LIKE PEOPLE, we have developed a plan, for observation, description, and communication of our responsibilities. This pattern can be applied to our future story studies, and it shows that comfort, and productivity are expressed in rhythm.

Respectfully submitted by



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APPENDIX A

RHYTHM/Dr. Bondi

JUST LIKE PEOPLE

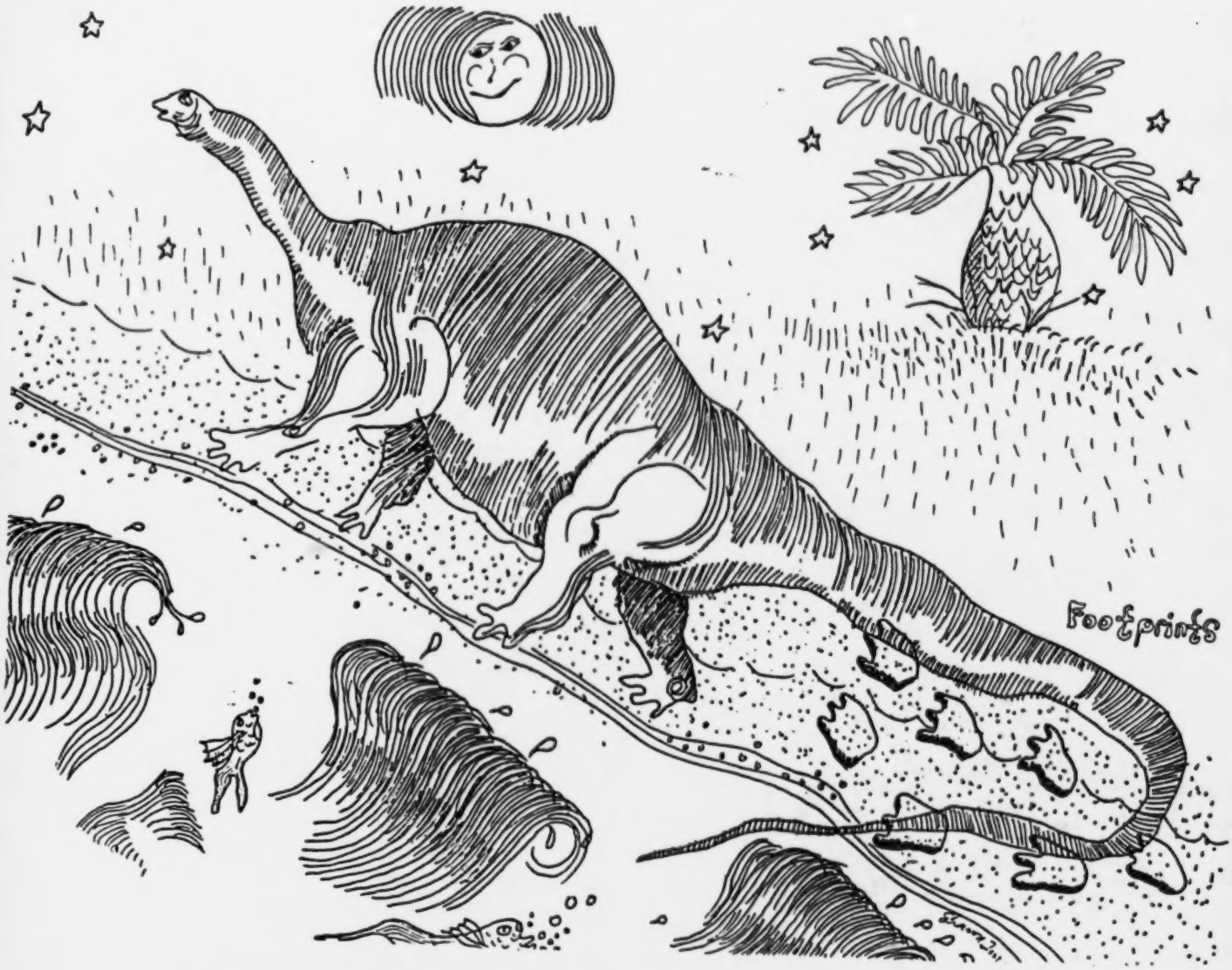
1. Some Dinosaurs were small. Some were big,
   just like people.
2. Dinosaurs needed water and food,
   just like people.
3. Dinosaurs ate with a mouth,
   just like people.
4. Dinosaurs had 2 eyes, 2 ears, 2 nostrils, feet, and a brain,
   just like people.
5. Dinosaurs made noises, just like people,
   But, they couldn't say words and sentences.
6. Dinosaurs could see sights,
   just like people.
7. Dinosaurs could hear sounds,
   just like people.
8. Dinosaurs could smell fragrances,
   just like people.
9. Dinosaurs could run,
   just like people.
10. Dinosaurs could walk,
    just like people.
11. Dinosaurs could swim,
    just like people.
12. Dinosaurs made footprints in sand and in mud,
    just like people.

APPENDIX B

RHYTHM/Dr. Bondi

APPENDIX C

RHYTHM/Dr. Bondi



APPENDIX D

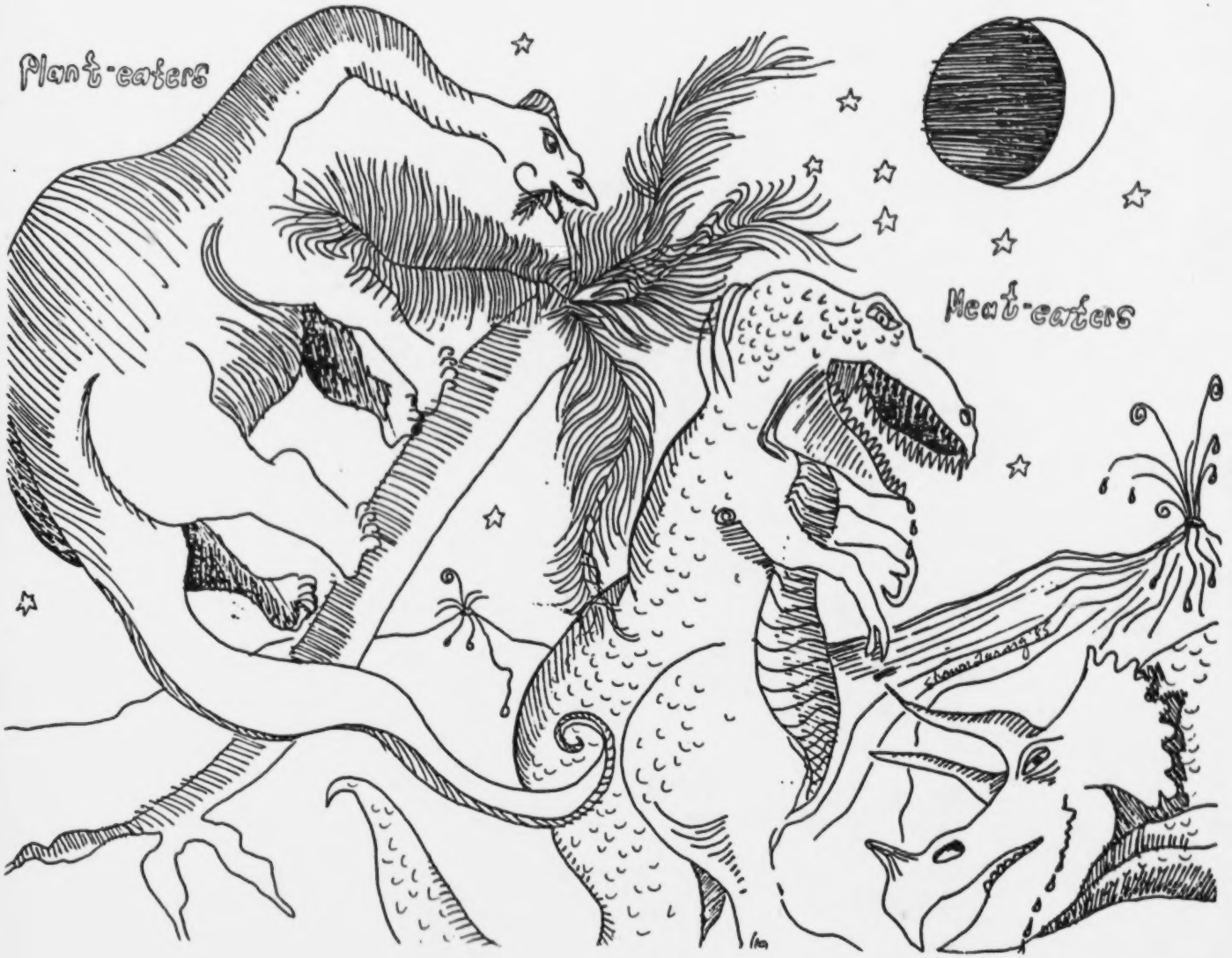
RHYTHM/Dr. Bondi

JUST LIKE PEOPLE

13. Some Dinosaurs ate meat. They were carnivorous,
just like people.
14. Some dinosaurs ate plants. They were herbivorous,
just like people.
15. Some Dinosaurs ate meat and plants. They were omnivorous,
just like people.
16. Dinosaurs sometimes liked to be on land,
just like people.
17. Dinosaurs sometimes liked to be in the water,
just like people.
18. Dinosaurs sometimes liked to be in the air,
just like people.
19. Some Dinosaurs had fingers, fingernails, and toes,
just like people.
20. Some Dinosaurs had webs between their toes.
People have no webs.
21. Maybe, some Dinosaurs had hair,
just like people.
22. Dinosaurs had two holes in the head, for ears,
just like people.
23. Sometimes, a Dinosaur had a long tail.
People have a tail bone.
24. Sometimes, a Dinosaur had a long neck.
People have a neck.

APPENDIX E

RHYTHM/Dr. Bondi



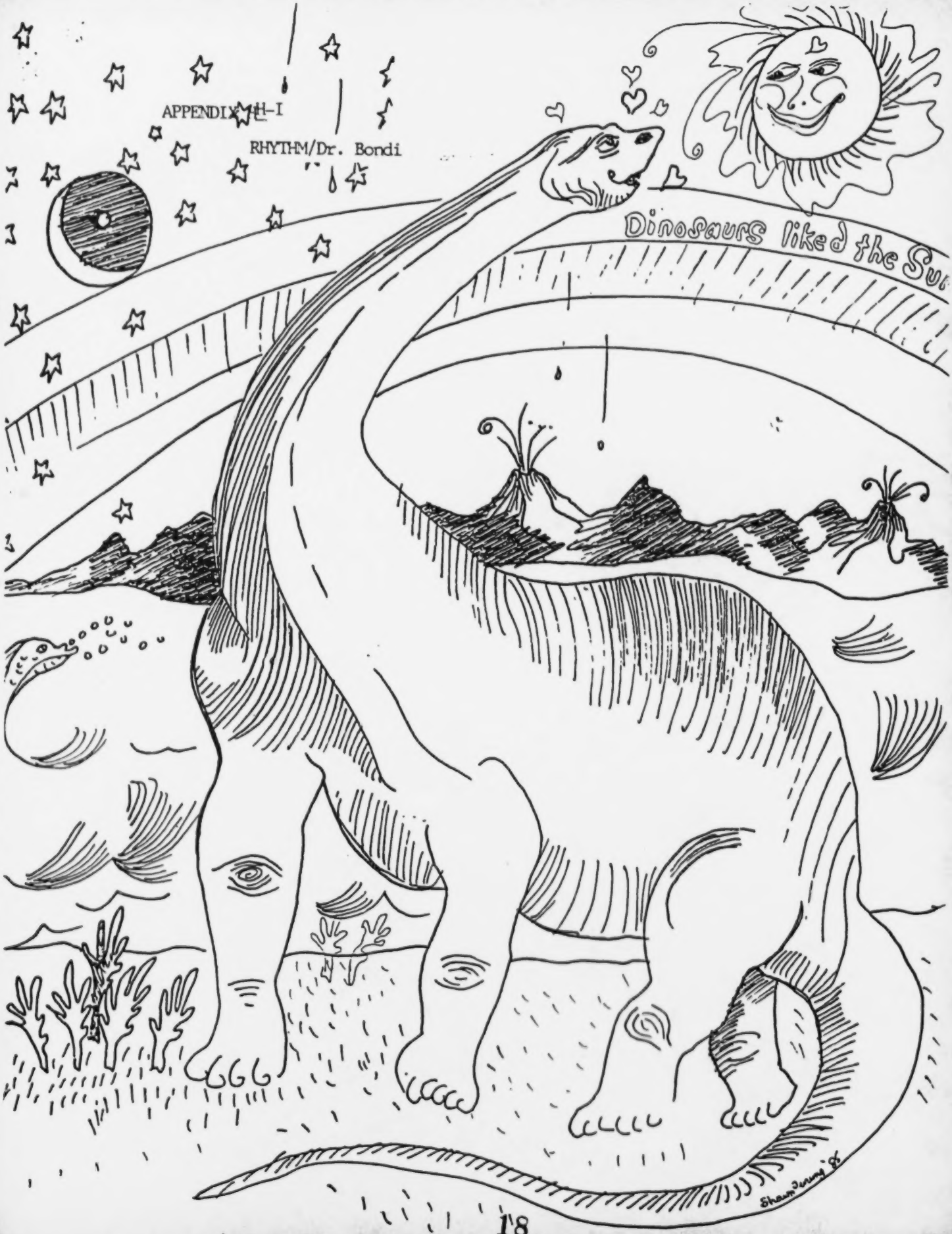
Webbed feet
long tail

APPENDIX G

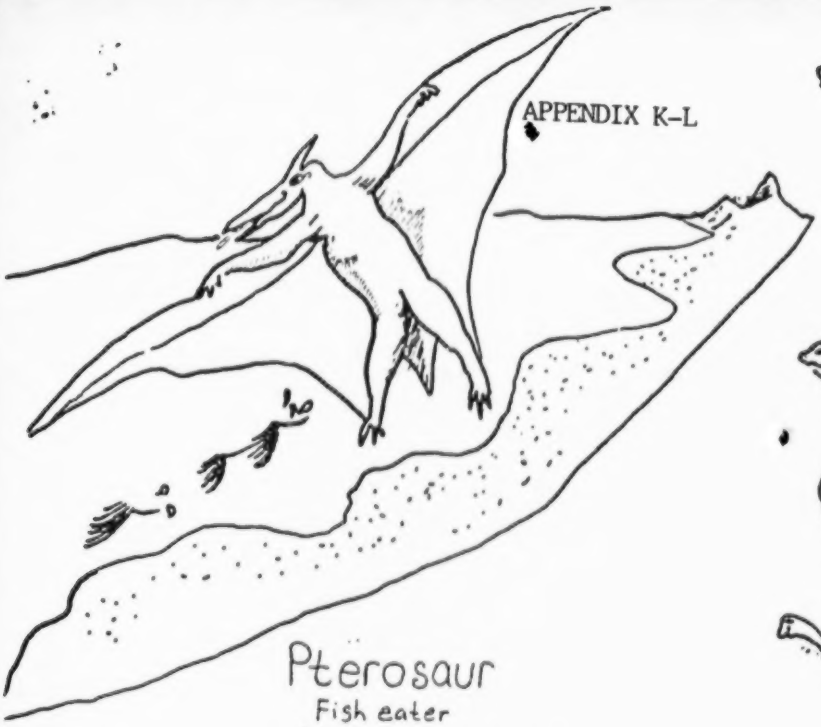
RHYTHM/Dr. Bondi

JUST LIKE PEOPLE

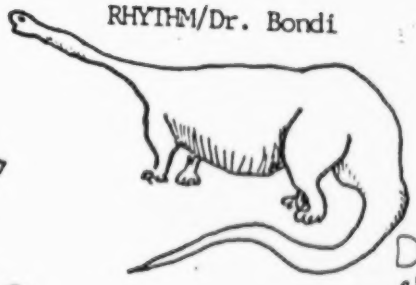
25. Dinosaurs liked the sun,
just like people.
26. Dinosaurs could touch objects,
just like people.
27. Dinosaurs could taste flavors,
just like people.
28. Dinosaurs could feel joy and pain,
just like people.
29. Some Dinosaurs had teeth,
just like people.
30. Some Dinosaurs ate fish,
just like people.
31. Dinosaurs sometimes got wet, in the rain,
just like people.
32. Dinosaurs sometimes liked to be in a tunnel,
just like people.
33. Dinosaurs needed a place to sleep,
just like people.
34. Dinosaurs sometimes felt hot,
just like people.
35. Dinosaurs sometimes felt cold,
just like people.
36. Dinosaurs liked to be with Dinosaurs,
and people like to be with people.


APPENDIX H-I
RHYTHM/Dr. Bondi
Dinosaurs liked the Su

APPENDIX J RHYTHM/Dr. Bondi



Pterosaur
Fish eater
liked to fly over water



Diplodocus
plant eater
Liked to be in water

Brontosaurus
plant eater
liked to be in water

Brachiosaurus
plant eater
liked to be near water

Allosaurus
Meat eater
liked to be on land

Tyrannosaurus Rex
Meat eater
liked to be on land

Trachodon
plant eater
liked to be near water

Stegasaurus
plant eater
liked to be on land

Triceratops
plant eater
liked to be on land

Protoceratops
plant eater
liked to be on land

Ankylosaurus
plant eater
liked to be on land

APPENDIX M

RHYTHM/Dr. Bondi